



November/December 2003

HOLIDAY GREETINGS!

At this special time of year, I want to offer my personal greetings to you and yours for a safe and happy holiday season, and a healthy and prosperous new year.

The past year has brought many challenges to our city and region. The budget situation, both locally and at the state level, has forced the City Council to redouble its efforts to find new and creative ways to continue to provide basic city services without cutting those programs or projects that will improve our quality of life. I want to thank you for your continued support and input as we work together to set the priorities for our district and the city.

Additionally, this year more than ever, we are reminded of those among us who are suffering and need our help. The recent wildfires ravaged the eastern part of our county and caused thousands to lose their homes and cost more than a dozen their lives. The rising cost of affordable housing in San Diego County has produced an increase in the number of homeless families at a time when unemployment numbers nationally continue to rise. Please keep these people in your thoughts and prayers this holiday season, and commit to help, however you can, to improve their lives in the new year.

We have much to be thankful for. There is an undeniable positive energy in the Third Council District that seems to present itself at every turn. You see it in the hard work and dedication of our neighborhood activists who conduct canyon cleanups and paint out graffiti, the community leaders who sit on local boards and committees, the staff members and volunteers of the hundreds of social service agencies who do such amazing outreach to those in need, and in the everyday acts of kindness and generosity that our residents and businesses show to one another. I can't thank you enough for helping make my job that much easier and so much more rewarding.

I'm honored to be your representative on the City Council, and I'm proud of what we've accomplished together and excited by the prospect of achievements yet to come.

Again, have a wonderful holiday!

ATKINS NAMED DEPUTY MAYOR

HISTORIC FIRST FOR MEMBER OF LGBT COMMUNITY

I am proud to share with you my appointment to the position of Deputy Mayor on December 1st by Mayor Dick Murphy, becoming the first member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community to hold this position in San Diego. The appointment was made official at the regularly scheduled council meeting that same day with the unanimous support of the City Council.

I am honored that Mayor Murphy has appointed me to this esteemed position, and I'm grateful for the support of my fellow councilmembers. I'm equally proud to be the first member of San Diego's LGBT community to be Deputy Mayor. In a purely historical context, it's incredibly humbling and at the same time empowering to be the first of anything, so I accept this appointment proudly, and share this honor not only with members of the LGBT community, but all the residents of the Third District.

The Deputy Mayor's duties include running the City Council meetings in the Mayor's absence, and meeting with visiting dignitaries and representing the city at official government, civic and social functions when the Mayor is out of town or has a scheduling conflict.

It's been more than 15 years since a councilmember from the Third Council District has been Deputy Mayor, so I share this honor with all of you!

In This Issue

Holiday Greeting ...	1
Atkins Appointed Deputy Mayor ...	1
District Three Improvements Funded ...	2
Neighborhood Watch Training Draws Heavy Turnout ...	3
Workforce Partnership To Provide Temporary Jobs ...	4
Photo Gallery ...	4

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES MAJOR NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS FOR COUNCIL DISTRICT THREE

At its regularly scheduled Council meeting on December 8th, the City Council approved a series of critical neighborhood improvement allocations which will benefit Council District Three directly. Included in the actions taken were the approval of a \$544,000 sidewalk replacement contract earmarked solely for locations in Council District Three, and funds for the installation of street lights and the modernization of traffic signals throughout the city.

The Third District has some of the oldest sidewalks in the city. When I was elected in 2000, I vowed to make improving these sidewalks one of my top priorities. The action taken by the Council



The District Three sidewalk program will help transform cracked and buckled sidewalks (above) into smooth, safe and attractive surfaces (right) throughout the district.

on December 8th is a major step forward toward improving these sidewalks. This substantial allocation shows that the Mayor and Council understand that this is a top priority for the residents of the Third District.

Since taking office, I have been a strong advocate for identifying additional resources for infrastructure projects throughout the district. This contract will replace 266 sidewalk locations that have been on the city's backlog list for extensive periods of time.

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This is the first time I can recall the Council approving a district-specific contract for sidewalk repairs which includes a partnership of efforts and resources between the Streets Division and a Council office. I view this as a creative way to focus on and whittle down the repair backlog that has accumulated during difficult budgetary times.

In addition to the approval of the sidewalks contract, the Council also approved two contracts that will allow for the much-needed installation of traffic signals and street lights. The contracts will assist with the Council District Three Mid-Block Street Light Program, which was funded with



\$400,000 from the District Three infrastructure loan. Under this program, mid-block streetlights will be installed throughout the district, with priority given to those requests that

have been lingering on the city's streetlight backlog. In addition, the contract will help install lights on El Cajon Boulevard and Adams Avenue.

Whenever we can access funds to make critical neighborhood and public safety improvements to our older, urban communities, we've hit a home run. Improving the aging infrastructure continues to be the primary focus of my attention in the district, and this Council action is another victory in our quest to improve the quality of life for District Three residents and create neighborhoods we can be proud of.

Construction on the sidewalks will run from March until August of 2004. The installation of the street lights and the modernization of traffic signals will be an ongoing project throughout 2004.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH TRAINING HELPS REACTIVATE WATCH PROGRAMS IN DISTRICT THREE

On November 8th, close to 100 District Three residents participated in a Neighborhood Watch Training sponsored by my office and the San Diego Police Department. Presentations were made by Police Chief William Lansdowne, a number of Community Relations Officers with experience in organizing watch programs, and local citizens already active in Neighborhood Watch.

The training workshop was held to help reactivate Neighborhood Watch programs throughout the district in an effort to help reduce crime. In the mid to late 1990s, there were over 200 active watch programs in the district. As crime fell by over 50 percent, many of the watch programs became inactive.

Following the presentations, community breakout sessions were held giving residents the chance to meet with the Community Relations Officer for their neighborhood.

To receive a Neighborhood Watch brochure which details how to start your own Neighborhood Watch Program, or to find out more information on Neighborhood Watch in your area, contact my office at 619/236-6633.



WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES MAJOR GRANT TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY JOBS FOR WILDFIRE DISASTER RELIEF

The San Diego Workforce Partnership has received a \$1.9 million grant for use in the San Diego County Workforce Investment Area to create temporary jobs to help with disaster relief following the recent wildfires. The grant is part of a larger \$12 million federal disaster relief package for San Diego, San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Ventura counties, \$4 million of which was made available for immediate release.

The funds can be used for temporary job creation to provide disaster relief employment on projects that provide food, clothing, shelter, and other humanitarian assistance. The money can also be used to support projects for demolition, cleaning, repair, renovation, and reconstruction of damaged and destroyed structures, facilities, and lands located within the wildfire disaster areas.

This grant is a major boost for both our disaster relief efforts and our job-creation efforts in the county. I applaud the Workforce Partnership and city staff, as well as the county, state and federal agencies, for working together not only to make the grant possible, but to get such a sizeable amount released for immediate use.

The San Diego Workforce Partnership has been working with the City of San Diego Economic and Community Development Department, the County of San Diego, the State of California Economic Development Department, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the

United States Department of Labor to apply for a National Emergency Grant. The \$12 million granted was from a request of \$35 million.

The funds can also be used for job-specific training, such as safety training, and for supportive services including child care and vans to transport workers. Priority in hiring will be given to those individuals impacted by the disaster, dislocated workers, and long-term unemployed workers.

Local workforce investment areas, and their career centers, will play a vital role in the recruitment of the workers funded by this grant. One of the long-term benefits of this grant is that some of the workers who are hired as temporary employees may later be integrated as full-time employees after the time limit on the grant has expired, or the grant cap has been exceeded. Anytime we can provide new jobs and help with disaster relief, we've created a winning situation for everyone.

The grant funds may be expended through public and private agencies and other organizations engaged in such projects. There is a wage cap of \$12,000, and workers cannot be employed for more than six months or 1,040 hours.

For more information on employment opportunities under this grant, contact the San Diego Workforce Partnership at 619-238-1445.

Photo Gallery



(above) Deputy Mayor Atkins honored the San Diego LGBT Community Center with a Council resolution honoring their 30th anniversary.



(above) Deputy Mayor Atkins and Council member Donna Frye present Mama's Kitchen with a Council resolution honoring their 13th annual Tree of Life celebration and commemorating World AIDS Day on December 1st.



(left) Deputy Mayor Atkins joins members of Second Chance's STRIVE program and students from Roosevelt Junior High School at the grand opening of Second Chance's Ben & Jerry's franchise on University Avenue in Hillcrest—the first Ben & Jerry's in the nation to be owned by a non-profit organization.



(above) Deputy Mayor Atkins tours the Mid-City Community Clinic in City Heights.

(below) Deputy Mayor Atkins helps cut the creative youth-inspired ribbon opening the City Heights Center on November 7th.

